

In the Claims:

Please amend claim 50 and add claim 83 as indicated below.

50. (currently amended) A method, comprising:

shipping a first carrier to an intermediate destination, wherein said first carrier comprises a plurality of discrete storage compartments ~~locations~~ each configured to store ~~an~~ a multi-dimensional array of item containers, wherein each storage compartment ~~location~~ is configured to permit its item container to be removed on an individual basis without removing other item containers stored in other ones of the storage compartments ~~locations~~;

at the intermediate destination, removing on an individual basis one of the item containers from said first carrier according to information stored in a memory device affixed to or contained within said first carrier or the item container being removed;

at the intermediate destination, according to the information stored in said memory device, inserting on an individual basis the item container removed from said first carrier into one of a plurality of storage locations of a second carrier configured to store the item container; and

shipping said second carrier to a final destination different than a final destination of the first carrier.

51. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 50, wherein the information stored in said memory device indicates that the item container removed at the intermediate destination is to be shipped to its final destination by a different shipping company than by which the item container was shipped to the intermediate destination.

52. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 50, further comprising updating the information stored in said memory device when the item container is removed from said first carrier or inserted to said second carrier.

53. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 52, further comprising uploading some or all of the updated information stored on the memory device to a computer network.

54. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 53, wherein said memory device comprises active memory.

55. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 53, wherein said uploading comprises interfacing to said memory device with a wireless or infrared communication link.

56. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 52, wherein said memory device is affixed to or contained within the item container removed at the intermediate destination.

57. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 52, wherein said memory device is affixed to or contained within said first carrier.

58. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 57, wherein the information includes shipping information for each of a plurality of item containers stored in the storage locations of said first carrier.

59. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 50, wherein the memory device comprises a global positioning system unit configured to update the information with position information for the memory device.

60. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 59, further comprising uploading the position information stored on the memory device to a computer network.

61. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 50, wherein the memory device comprises one or more environmental sensors configured to update the information with data on one or more environmental parameters comprising one or more of temperature, humidity and vibration.

62. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 61, wherein the memory device is configured to record in the information if a threshold is exceeded for one of the one or more environmental parameters during shipping.

63. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 61, wherein the memory device is configured to record a log of measurements for the one or more environmental parameters measured during shipping.

64. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 50, wherein said first carrier and said second carrier are configured to store an over-sized item container in two or more adjacent ones of their respective storage locations.

65. (previously presented) An apparatus, comprising:

a processor;

a data interface coupled to the processor;

a power supply coupled to the processor;

wherein the processor is configured to cause the data interface to read information from a memory device affixed to or contained within a first carrier or item container stored within the first carrier at an intermediate destination;

wherein, from the information, said processor is configured to determine an item container to be removed on an individual basis from a storage location of the first carrier and inserted on an individual basis into a storage location of a second carrier to be shipped to a different final destination than the first carrier.

66. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, wherein the processor is further configured to obtain shipping information from a server computer to use with the information read from the memory device to determine an item container to be removed from the first carrier and inserted into the second carrier.

67. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 66, wherein the processor is configured to obtain updated shipping information at the intermediate destination from the server computer which is different from and overrides information from the memory device for determining the second carrier.

68. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, wherein the data interface is a wireless or infrared communication link.

69. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, wherein from the information stored in the memory device, the processor is configured to determine that the item container removed at the intermediate destination is to be shipped to its final destination by a different shipping company than by which the item container was shipped to the intermediate destination.

70. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, wherein the processor is configured to update the information stored in the memory device through the data interface when the item container is removed from the first carrier or inserted to the second carrier.

71. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 70, wherein the processor is configured to upload some or all of the updated information stored on the memory device to a computer network.

72. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 71, wherein said memory device comprises active memory.

73. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, wherein the information includes shipping information for each of a plurality of item containers stored in storage locations of the first carrier.

74. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, wherein processor is configured to read global positioning system position information from the memory device through the data interface.

75. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 74, wherein the processor is configured to upload the position information stored on the memory device to a server computer.

76. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, wherein the processor is configured to read data from the memory device on one or more environmental parameters comprising one or more of temperature, humidity and vibration.

77. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 76, wherein the processor is configured to determine if a threshold has been exceeded for one of the one or more environmental parameters during shipping.

78. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, wherein the apparatus is hand-held.

79. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, further comprising a digital camera, wherein the processor is configured to download one or more images of the item container or item stored therein at the intermediate destination to the memory device through the data interface.

80. (previously presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 65, further comprising a digital scale, wherein the processor is configured to compare a weight measured by the digital scale with weight information stored in the memory device.

81. (previously presented) The apparatus as recite in claim 65, further comprising a conveyer belt means coupled to the processor and configured to move the item container.

82. (previously presented) The apparatus as recite in claim 65, further comprising an automated arm means coupled to the processor and configured to insert or remove the item container from a carrier.

83. (new) A method, comprising:

shipping a first carrier to an intermediate destination, wherein said first carrier comprises a plurality of storage compartments each configured to store an item containers, wherein each storage compartment is configured to permit its item container to be removed on an individual basis without removing other item containers stored in other ones of the storage compartments;

at the intermediate destination, removing on an individual basis one of the item containers from said first carrier according to information stored in a memory device affixed to or contained within said first carrier or the item container being removed;

at the intermediate destination, according to the information stored in said memory device, inserting on an individual basis the item container removed from said first carrier into one of a plurality of storage locations of a second carrier configured to store the item container;

wherein information indicating that said removing and said inserting should be performed at the intermediate destination is stored in the memory device prior to said shipping, and wherein the information is accessed from the memory device at the intermediate destination to determine whether said removing and said inserting should be performed; and

shipping said second carrier to a final destination different than a final destination of the first carrier.